

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-11 ISO-00 FEA-01 AID-05 CEQ-01

CIAE-00 OFA-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 EPA-01 INR-07

L-03 NSF-01 NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-04 USIA-06 OES-03 SS-15

SP-02 INT-05 /101 W

----- 085202

R 201530Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6667

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMCONSUL BARCELONA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH, SENV, PFOR, MT

SUBJECT: MALTA'S SELECTION FOR MEDITERRANEAN ANTI-POLLUTION
CENTER HAILED LOCALLY

1. THE NEWS THAT THE UNEP-SPONSORED CONFERENCE OF
MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES IN BARCELONA ON POLLUTION CONTROL
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SELECTED MALTA AS THE SITE FOR
A \$1.7 MILLION REGIONAL ANTI-POLLUTION CENTER HAS BEEN
HAILED LOCALLY AS ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT VICTORY FOR MINTOFF'S
FOREIGN POLICY. THE LOCAL PRESS HAS GIVEN HEAVY COVERAGE
TO NEWS REPORTS OF THE CONFERENCE AND RESULTING TREATY
SIGNED BY TWELVE OF THE SIXTEEN PARTICIPATING NATIONS,
BUT EMPHASIS WAS PLACED ON THE DECISION TO LOCATE THE
REGIONAL CENTER HERE.

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2. FOREIGN SECRETARY ABELA AND AMBASSADOR ATTARD

KINGSWELL HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THE REGIONAL CENTER TO FIGHT POLLUTION FROM OIL SPILLAGES WILL START FUNCTIONING IN MALTA LATE THIS SUMMER. THE CENTER WILL COLLECT AND DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ON INVENTORIES, ON EXPERIMENTS AND EQUIPMENT IN EACH MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRY IN THE FIELD OF COMBATTING OIL POLLUTION EMERGENCIES, INCLUDING PLANS, METHODS AND TECHNIQUES IN THAT FIELD. EMPHASIZING TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS INITIALLY, THE MALTESE HOPE THAT THE CENTER WILL LATER BE EXPANDED TO ENABLE IT TO PERFORM ACTUAL ANTI-OIL POLLUTION OPERATIONS AT SEA AND THEREBY CREATE A NUMBER OF JOBS FOR MALTESE.

3. IN CASE OF AN OIL SPILLAGE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, THE MALTA REGIONAL CENTER WILL RECEIVE ALL INFORMATION ABOUT THE LOCATION OF THE SPILLAGE AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS, SUCH AS WIND AND WAVES, LIKELY TO AFFECT ITS MOVEMENTS. IT WILL THEN TAKE NECESSARY STEPS TO INFORM THE COUNTRIES WHICH MIGHT BE AFFECTED AND IF NECESSARY ASSIST IN THE FACILITATION OF COOPERATIVE MEASURES TO REMOVE THE DANGER.

4. INITIALLY THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF TO RUN THE CENTER WILL CONSIST OF A DIRECTOR, TECHNICAL EXPERT AND INFORMATION OFFICER. MORE PERSONNEL WILL BE RECRUITED WHEN THE CENTER BECOMES FULLY OPERATIONAL.

5. COMMENT: THE DECISION TO LOCATE THE REGIONAL CENTER IN MALTA CLIMAXED A MAJOR EFFORT EXTENDING OVER ALMOST FOUR YEARS AND HAS BEEN WIDELY WELCOMED HERE BY BOTH MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES. IT IS A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OF SORTS FOR AMBASSADOR JOSEPH ATTARD KINGSWELL, WHO HEADED THE MALTESE DELEGATION IN BARCELONA, AND THE DECISION IS LIKELY TO ENHANCE FURTHER THE LABOR GOVERNMENTS' CHANCES FOR REELECTION IN THE FORTHCOMING GENERAL ELECTION. SMITH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLLUTION CONTROL, PRESS COMMENTS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976VALLET00211
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760066-1019
From: VALLETTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760228/aaaaaxzx.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 MAR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <31 MAR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MALTA'S SELECTION FOR MEDITERRANEAN ANTI-POLLUTION CENTER HAILED LOCALLY
TAGS: TECH, SENV, PFOR, MT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006